A Report on Social and Emotional Dynamics of Individuals with Musical Intelligence and Musical Training

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Abstract

Music has been in its formal existence for so many years now and it has also been utilized to enhance, relax and help man's meditation. This study focused on how music can or may influence an individual. The researchers investigated and described the influence of Howard Gardner's theory on Multiple Intelligence (specifically, musical intelligence). The study is a qualitative investigation on the respondent's social and emotional dynamics in relation to musical intelligence and music training.

Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences

Howard Gardner theorized that there are multiple intelligences, and that we all use one or two for the most effective learning. Our culture teaches, tests, reinforces and rewards primarily two kinds of intelligence: verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical. His theory proposes that there are at least eight other kinds of intelligence that are equally important. They are "languages" that most people speak, and that cut through cultural, educational, and ability differences.

The mind is not comprised of a single representation or a single language of representations. Rather, we harbor numerous internal representations in our minds. Some scholars speak of "modules of mind," some of a "society of mind," and in this case it is "multiple intelligences." Gardner's intelligences include:

- Verbal Linguistic intelligence (sensitive to the meaning and order of words as in a poet): Use activities that involve hearing, listening, impromptu or formal speaking, tongue twisters, humor, oral or silent reading, documentation, creative writing, spelling, journal, poetry.

- Logical-mathematical intelligence (able to handle chains of reasoning and recognize patterns and orders as in a scientist): Use activities that involve abstract symbols/formulas, outlining, graphic organizers, numeric sequences, calculation, deciphering codes, problem solving.

- Musical intelligence (sensitive to pitch, melody, rhythm, and tone as in a composer): Use activities that involve audio tape, music recitals, singing on key, whistling, humming, environmental sounds, percussion vibrations, rhythmic patterns, music composition, tonal patterns.

- Spatial intelligence (perceive the world accurately and try to re-create or transform aspects of that world as in a sculptor or airplane pilot): Use activities that involve art, pictures, sculpture, drawings, doodling, mind mapping, patterns/designs, color schemes, active imagination, imagery, block building.

- Bodily Kinesthetic intelligence (able to use the body skillfully and handle objects adroitly, as in an athlete or dancer): Use activities that involve role playing, physical gestures, drama, inventing, ball passing, sports games, physical exercise, body language, dancing.

- Interpersonal intelligence (understand people and relationship as in a salesman or teacher) and think by bouncing ideas off of each other (socializes who are people smart): Use activities that involve group projects, division of labor, sensing others' motives, receiving/giving feedback, collaboration skills.

- Intrapersonal intelligence (possess access to one's emotional life as a means to understand oneself and others exhibited by individuals with accurate views of themselves): Use activities that involve emotional processing, silent reflection methods, thinking strategies, concentration skills, higher order reasoning, "centering" practices, meta-cognitive techniques.

- Naturalist (connected to the intricacies and subtleties in nature such as Charles Darwin and Meriwether Lewis of Lewis and Clark fame): Use activities that involve bringing the outdoors into the class, relating to the natural world, charting, mapping changes, observing wildlife, keeping journals or logs.

The study aimed to determine any significant changes or developments among the students‘ personality, social and emotional dynamics such as social relations, social interactions, social perceptions, social behavior, social identity, expression of emotions, emotional perceptions, moods, attitudes, self – esteem, self - confidence, and self – identity that may be attributed to musical intelligence. It is a pilot survey in this particular area.

This study can be used as a basis for future studies about musical intelligence and musical training either at an early age or during adolescence period. It limits itself in just describing the social and emotional dynamics that musical intelligence or musical training’s influence in their personal lives.

The study did not experiment, compare or evaluate any particular group of individuals but instead, investigated and described the social and emotional dynamics of selected college student participants. It is considered as a qualitative study that entailed multiple case studies.

The method of sampling was purposive sampling. The instrument used was a semi-structured open ended questionnaire. The participants were given enough time to answer the questions. They were instructed that there were no wrong or right answers and the answers must be based on their personal experience since childhood to present.

After answering the questions there was a brief discussion about their experiences in music and how they were influenced by it. Their thoughts and views about music as they grew up were also discussed briefly. This served as a more in depth analysis of a participant in the case study.

The results of the study concluded the following:

A. SELF CONFIDENCE INFLUENCED BY MUSICAL INTELLIGENCE

Based on the results of the study all of the participants accepted that there was an increase in their self-confidence because of musical intelligence and/or music training. This may be attributed to public performances since they are all performing artists. The researchers may infer that the more public performances these individuals render, the higher the confidence level and comfortable they become as the time goes on.

Another aspect is the satisfaction of learning an instrument or just even learning how to sing. This achievement may also be a factor on why their self-confidence increased. Just like an artist (painter, sculptor or poet) with their accepted artworks.

Appreciation and approval because of their performances can also be a factor. If an individual is praised or admired because of their talent, this may have a positive effect in their personality. A term called Positive Reinforcement is a very good example of this.

B. COMMUNICATION IN RELATION WITH MUSICAL INTELLIGENCE OR MUSIC TRAINING

In music training, communication is the key to all teacher student relationship. There should be an established rapport between both. In a group, such as a band, choir or any group of musicians that perform, communication is also vital for a successful performance. Synchronization of the group is also a key to a successful performance and this requires communication and good relationships between the individuals.

As we all know, even in family members, communication should be a foundation to a good relationship. This also applies to group of musicians as they perform in public.

As it was mentioned before, because of praise, acceptance and admiration, even non-musicians are very eager to speak and share ideas with the performers as they praise the performance perse. This may be a factor that would establish an increase in communication skills with individuals with musical intelligence or music training.

C. PERCEPTION IN LIFE DUE TO MUSIC

Music has always been used for relaxation, prayer, meditation for many years now. This may have paved the way to developing the personality of an individual, the perspective in life, optimism, and even self-healing and understanding of the beauty of the world.

Many leaders have an in-depth appreciation for music. This indicates that music may influence them in some way or another. Leaders have listened to music and have appreciated it for a long time now. Some leaders have used music to plan, organize and evaluate situations.

Not to mention the great minds of Einstein, Mozart, Beethoven, Bach and even military leaders have been influenced by music.

D. INVOLVEMENT IN MUSIC

Based on the results 63% percent chose to be involved in music. This indicates that more than half of the participants wanted to be involved in music. The researchers accept that there should be more studies and research conducted in order to infer that many of our youth, specially the adolescents are interested and should be involved in music training for holistic education.

E. MUSIC TRAINING

Many Psychologist and researchers have claimed that music training at an early age may enhance cognitive development and augment intelligence. Gardner's Multiple Intelligence therapy has influenced educators, social scientists, researchers and psychologists.

This coincides with a recent article from Amy Spray (2018). According to Spray (2018), musical training has shown to lead to improvements in a wide variety of different skills, including memory and spatial learning for example. In addition, language skills such as verbal memory, literacy and verbal intelligence have been shown to strongly benefit from musical training.

Musicians are also more adept at processing speech in environments where there are large amounts of background noise, possess a greater propensity for processing auditory signals that are in some way degraded and show an advantage over their musically naive counterparts when it comes to pitch detection in both music and language. Recent advances in technologies have also allowed researchers to probe into the neural (functional, structural and electrophysiological) underpinnings of these adaptations.

Music could potentially function as a training ground for language skills and may potentially offer an effective, economical and enjoyable activity that could help improve language skills in children around the world if employed in schools. Giving adolescents musical training could help kick-start and accelerate maturation of their brains.

These advantages may also have potential to provide enhancements to a wider range of skills, such as the learning of a second language. The study suggests that musical training could help prolong the window of time in which the brain is developing and is able to deal with complex auditory input, which in turn could make second language learning more achievable to people who otherwise may struggle.

It is important to note however, that although musical training was shown to produce benefits for the phonological awareness language tasks, for the other two tests of phonological memory and rapid naming, no difference between the two groups of adolescents was found. This suggests that although musical training does have the potential to enhance some forms of language skills, there are areas that it does not improve.

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